

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WILDLIFE & FRESHWATER FISH MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, October 31, 2017

Richardson & Robbins Building Auditorium

89 Kings Highway, Dover, Delaware

Phone 302-739-9912, FAX 302-739-6157

ADVISORY COUNCIL

1. Edward A. Montague, Chair
2. Garrett Grier, Jr., Vice Chair
3. Raymond F. Burris
4. Neal Dukes
5. Craig A. Karsnitz
6. Joe C. Johnson
7. Steven M. Kendus
8. Dale R. Scuse (Absent)
9. F. Thomas Unruh

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

1. David E. Saveikis
2. Rob Hossler
3. Emily Boyd
4. Lt. Carl Winckoski

PUBLIC

5 Visitors

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Montague at 7:00 PM.

Agenda Item 1. Approval of Minutes (Chairman).

A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to approve the September 26, 2017 meeting minutes as written. After approval of the minutes, newly appointed Councilman Unruh was introduced, who provided a summary of his background.

Agenda Item 2. Update on Future U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Migratory Game Bird Regulations (Rob Hossler).

Rob Hossler, Administrator for the Wildlife Section, provided an update of several recent changes in migratory game bird regulations, most of which will become effective in the fall of 2018. After 20 years of attempts, the eight states in the Atlantic Flyway that do not allow migratory bird hunting on Sundays, including Delaware, will be provided compensatory days for webless migratory birds similar to that provided for waterfowl. For example, if the woodcock season framework is permitted to be 45 days, then Delaware and the other seven states that do not allow Sunday migratory bird hunting will be permitted to have a "true" 45-day season in which Sundays do not count against these days. This will mean additional hunting opportunities for these states that will be able to hunt the full number of days permitted.

Additionally, the dove season framework has been extended from January 15 to January 31, which will allow states to hunt doves later in the season if desired.

The earliest that Delaware could be permitted to establish a tundra swan season would be the 2019/2020 hunting season, since the eastern population of tundra swans is managed across the Atlantic, Mississippi and Central Flyways and additional time is needed for these flyways to review Delaware's tundra swan hunt proposal. This amount of time is also needed due to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's change in setting seasons more than a year in advance.

Mr. Hossler corrected some misinformation he has seen and heard concerning bag limits for mallards for the 2018/19 season. The bag limit for mallards for the 2018/19 season will remain at a daily bag limit of four mallards with no more than two being hen mallards.

Agenda Item 3. Update on 2017 Deer Harvest & Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) (Emily Boyd).

Emily Boyd, deer and furbearer biologist, provided a PowerPoint presentation on Delaware's 2017/18 deer harvest to date. As of the end of the October seasons, harvest was down slightly (6%) when compared to the same time period for the 2016/17 season. Most of this decline may be attributed to the warm weather during the October muzzleloader season.

Ms. Boyd also provided an update on Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) outbreaks in Delaware during 2017. EHD is caused by a virus transmitted by the bite of midges, and usually occurs during summer or fall drought conditions when both deer and biting midges are concentrated around water sources. The virus causes internal hemorrhaging/bleeding, which in most cases causes death to the infected deer. Delaware has only

experienced small, scattered outbreaks of EHD this year compared to other states where there have been more significant outbreaks.

Agenda Item 4. Delaware Deer Management and Damage Assistance (Rob Hossler).

Rob Hossler, Administrator for the Wildlife Section, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Deer Damage Assistance Program (DDAP) and the Severe Deer Damage Assistance Program (SDDAP) offered by the Division to assist farmers and landowners with crop and plant damage caused by white-tailed deer. These programs were created in 1996 and 2006, respectively. The programs are designed to promote the harvest of antlerless deer, specifically does, which has been proven to be the most effective way of managing deer populations to reduce crop and plant damage. Applications for both programs are submitted annually through the Division's website, with the Division issuing permits to approved participants.

The DDAP provides enrollees an unlimited number of antlerless deer damage tags at no cost to use in conjunction with their regular deer hunting tags during deer hunting seasons. Harvest of deer outside of the regular hunting season is not permitted; however, deer may be harvested during the muzzleloader and handgun seasons with a shotgun.

The SDDAP provides an unlimited number of antlerless deer damage tags at no cost that can be used to harvest antlerless deer during and outside of the regular hunting seasons, specifically August 15 – May 15. The harvest of deer between May 16 and August 14 is prohibited due to the fawning season when fawns depend upon their mothers to survive. Participants are able to use a shotgun, muzzleloader, crossbow, compound bow, recurve bow or longbow to harvest antlerless deer during this extended time period. Due to the liberal harvest methods and dates provided by the SDDAP, applicants are required to provide the Division the names of hunters that will be pursuing deer under their permit.

Since both the DDAP and SDDAP are not fully utilized by many farmers, Mr. Hossler explained ways that the implementation of these programs can be improved by farmers providing incentives to their hunters, by hunters putting more effort in harvesting deer for the primary purpose of controlling populations and by the Division improving its public outreach efforts.

Agenda Item 5. Director Update (David E. Saveikis).

Director Saveikis stated that the Division will continue the dialog on deer crop damage and work to improve the DDAP and SDDAP by partnering with farmers and the Department of Agriculture over the next several months to balance the reduction of excessive deer numbers causing crop damage with sustainable population management of this important game species.

The Division's legislative agenda for the coming year is being developed. There are a few holdover bills initiated by the General Assembly last year, which are still subject to action this coming session that begins in January. These bills include use of air bows for deer hunting, pistol and straight wall rifle caliber for deer hunting and use of handguns in the deer damage assistance program.

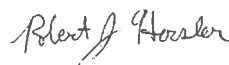
AGENDA FOR THE 11/28/2017 ADVISORY

COUNCIL MEETING

1. Approval of Minutes (Chairman).
2. Pistol-Caliber Rifle Proposal (Constituent – Richard Stallings).
3. Commercial Game Preserve Participant License Proposal – (Constituent – Andrew Smith).
4. Director Update (David E. Saveikis).

There being no further business, a motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.

Sincerely,



Robert Hossler
Recording Secretary